

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, UN, US, RQ, CU

SUBJECT: PUERTO RICO IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24: A POSSIBLE STRATEGY

REF: A. USUN 3846 B. USUN 3955 C. USUN 4504

SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN DEPUTY PERMREP DUNCAN CAMPBELL PROVIDED US WITH FURTHER DETAILS OF HIS INFORMAL PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A RESOLUTION IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITING THE COMMITTEE FROM CONSIDERING PUERTO RICO UNLESS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADDS PUERTO RICO TO THE LIST OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES, A HIGHLY UNLIKELY EVENTUALITY. OUR INITIAL OPINION IS THAT CAMPBELL'S IDEA MERITS VERY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AND MAY INDEED POSE A FAIRLY PERMANENT SOLUTION TO THE INCREASINGLY TIME CONSUMING STRUGGLE OVER ACRIMONIOUS COMMITTEE OF 24 DELIBERATIONS ON PUERTO RICO. END SUMMARY.

1. IN RESPONSE TO OUR INQUIRY, AUSTRALIAN DEPUTY PERMREP DUNCAN CAMPBELL, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24, PROVIDED US WITH FURTHER DETAILS OF HIS INFORMAL PROPOSAL REGARDING PUERTO RICO IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 (USUN 3955).

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2. CAMPBELL'S PROPOSAL IS TO INTRODUCE (OR HAVE SOME OTHER

DELEGATION INTRODUCE) A RESOLUTION WHICH WOULD SPECIFICALLY PROHIBIT THE COMMITTEE OF 24 FROM CONSIDERING PUERTO RICO UNLESS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADDS PUERTO RICO TO THE LIST OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES WHICH SERVES AS THE BASIS FOR ITS DELIBERATIONS. THIS LIST WAS TRANSMITTED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AS ANNEX 1 TO THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 1963 (DOCUMENT NO. A/544/6/REV.1). IT IS DESCRIBED ON P. 5 AND APPEARS ON P. 288 OF THE ABOVE REPORT. PUERTO RICO IS THE ONLY TERRITORY WITH WHICH THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE DEALS THAT IS NOT ON THE LIST.

3. IN CAMPBELL'S OPINION, THE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH AN APPROACH IS THAT IT CALLS FOR A VOTE ON A PROCEDURAL MATTER RATHER THAN REQUIRING MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24 TO CONFRONT A SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE. CAMPBELL FURTHER BELIEVES THIS APPROACH WOULD APPEAL TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24 SUCH AS INDIA AND CHINA (TIBET) WHICH HAVE THEIR OWN TERRITORIES WHICH THEY WOULD NOT WANT LIABLE TO CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE OF 24 AT SOME FUTURE DATE ON A SIMILAR BASIS TO THAT ADVANCED FOR CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO. CAMPBELL STATED THAT SOME OF OUR FRIENDS IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 HAVE TOLD HIM THAT THEY ARE "TIRED OF FIGHTING THE US BATTLE ON PUERTO RICO." HE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS IS NOT THE AUSTRALIAN POSITION BUT THAT THESE STATEMENTS UNDERLINE THE NECESSITY FOR DEFINITIVE ACTION ON PUERTO RICO.

4. CAMPBELL SAID THAT THE ONLY PERSON WITH WHOM HE HAS DISCUSSED THIS PROPOSAL IN ANY DETAIL IS INDIAN PERMREP JAIPAL, WHO SAID HE TAKES THE US POSITION ON PUERTO RICO VERY SERIOUSLY AND RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO THE IDEA. CAMPBELL EMPHASIZED THAT ANY VISIBLE US INVOLVEMENT IN THE RESOLUTION WOULD BE THE KISS OF DEATH AND ADVISED PARTICULAR DISCRETION.

5. COMMENT: OUR INITIAL REACTION TO CAMPBELL'S IDEA IS VERY FAVORABLE. WE BELIEVE THAT IF THE GROUNDWORK IS CAREFULLY LAID, A RESOLUTION SUCH AS CAMPBELL SUGGESTS WOULD STAND A GOOD CHANCE OF PASSAGE IN THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE. WE AGREE WITH HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE ADVANTAGES OF A PROCEDURAL RATHER THAN A SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM. THE DANGER THAT

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SUCH A RESOLUTION POSES IS, OF COURSE, THAT IT MIGHT SEEM TO INVITE SOME AFFIRMATIVE ACTION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO INDEED PLACE PUERTO RICO ON THE LIST OF TERRITORIES TO WHICH THE DECLARATION CONTAINED IN RESOLUTION 1514 (XV) APPLIES. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE WE COULD DEFEAT ANY SUCH ATTEMPT.

6. OUR PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE ON HOW MEMBER STATES WOULD LINE UP ON AN ATTEMPT TO INSCRIBE AN ITEM ON

PUERTO RICO ON THE AGENDA IS THAT 70 (INCLUDING THE US) WOULD OPPOSE, 37 WOULD VOTE IN FAVOR AND 39 WOULD ABSTAIN (REF. C). IN 1971 THE GENERAL COMMITTEE VOTED 10 (US) - 5 - 8 THAT THE PUERTO RICAN ITEM WHICH CUBA ATTEMPTED TO INSCRIBE NOT BE INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA OF THE UNGA. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SUPPORTED THIS RECOMMENDATION BY A VOTE OF 57 (US) - 26 - 38.

7. WE RECOMMEND THAT USUN BE AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE TO CAMPBELL OUR INITIAL FAVORABLE REACTION TO HIS PROPOSAL AND TO PURSUE THE IDEA WITH HIM.
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